

The spirit of Jumu'ah

The best day the sun rises over is Friday; on it Allah created Adam. On it, he was made to enter paradise, on it he was expelled from it, and the Last Hour will take place on no other day than Friday.

- Sunan Abu Dawood

listened to intently – with wisdom of this world and the next being the content of Imam's speeches. An Imam – either through the fact that you see him every Friday or because of his charismatic personality or both – never fails to build a rapport with his audience, becoming a well-known and well-respected figure in the neighbourhood.

A mosque, by all means and on any given day and time, is a peaceful place. It can be

about attending the prayer half-heartedly. Last-in-first-out may well be a good accounting system, but there is no reason to adhere to it on Jumu'ah! Why not go the mosque a little bit early and listen to what the Imam has to say instead of entering at the last minute?

A Hadith says, "When it is Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and

went to see a caravan. Surah Al-Jumu'ah says, "But when they saw a transaction or a diversion, (O Muhammad), they rushed to it and left you standing. Say, 'What is with Allah is better than diversion or transaction, and Allah is the best of providers.'"

A prayer is not just a physical activity – it embodies the spirit and the soul. So do it with all your heart.

POST-JUMU'AH SHOPPING!

Besides the fact that a mosque is a place of spirituality and divinity, it is also a centre for the neighbourhood. And the Friday congregation makes a mosque a place visited by hundreds or even thousands.

Given the 'traffic', it is obvious why vendors set up their makeshift stalls or carts around the mosque.

Skullcaps, prayer beads, prayer mats et al are not the only things for sale.

There are vendors selling everything from clothing to fruits and vegetables. It becomes a vibrant market and allows for some quick

shopping.

After the prayers are over, many devotees buy things on their way home. Shaila Ameen, 48, recollects her father always bringing something or the other when he used to come home from the mosque. "I used to wait eagerly for my dad to return home and hand me something. He sometimes used to bring me balloons, especially after the Eid prayers. It has made such a lasting impression on me that even now I am fascinated by balloons and become elated when I get one!"

On any given Friday, a market settles down around a mosque, and if it is a Friday on Ramadan, the market is busier, offering a diverse range of things to buy. And if it is Eid, then you can only imagine the site and its ambience.

Be it to please a dear one or to do some groceries, the post-Jumu'ah market is a vibrant and essential one!

By M H Haider

keep writing the names of the persons coming to the mosque in succession according to their arrivals. When the Imam comes out (for Jumu'ah prayer) they (i.e. the angels) fold their papers and listen to the Khutba." (Sahih al Bukhari).

We should also refrain from chatting during the sermon. And definitely keep your smartphone in your pocket instead of playing games or browsing Facebook!

Even during the time of our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him), some people, during a congregation, got up and

What happens after the prayers, reflect how a mosque plays an important role in society. A few people personally bid farewell to the Imam, shaking hands or exchanging greetings. Meaningwhile, clusters form, with people having a little chat while on their way out of the mosque. Cheerful faces, smiles or even a slight laughter follow. The congregation offers the opportunity for neighbours and friends to meet and catch up.

Therefore, a mosque and its congregation prayers are a great way of keeping ties with your neighbourhood. And Jumu'ah is a very special prayer, with spiritual as well as social relevance.

So, come this Friday, prepare yourself well and attend the congregation wholeheartedly. Relish in the divine spirit of Jumu'ah.

By M H Haider

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Islam places a huge significance on Friday. The above words, from Hadith, hold testament to that. It is on Friday we assemble together at a mosque to attend Jumu'ah, a weekly prayer that is full of spiritual and social importance.

The word Jumu'ah basically means assembly, gathering or congregation. And this day, in Arabic, is known as Yaumul Jumu'ah: the day of congregation. It is a day dedicated to this congregational prayer.

And just like any other social event, there are preparations. Many people prefer bathing before they go to the mosque for the congregation. I remember, when I was a child, my mother made sure that I was properly bathed and wearing fresh clothes before she handed me to my father to take me to the mosque along with him. But that was not before he applied a hint of attar on my clothes.

Looking and smelling all fresh, we used to set out together.

Another Hadith, mentioned in Sahih al Bukhari, narrates, "Any man who bathes on Friday, perfumes himself if he has perfume, wears the best of his clothes, then goes to the mosque and offers as many prayers as he wishes while not harming anybody, then listens quietly while the Imam speaks until he offers the prayer, will have all his sins between that Friday and the next forgiven."

The sermons are meant to be

your simple and modest neighbourhood mosque, or, it can be an imposing and a splendid one, complete with majestic domes and towering minarets and elegant arches. Whatever the case, a mosque strikes a spiritual cord - a mere mortal's stance with the divine.

Jumu'ah prayers are therefore very important. They let you experience the peacefulness of a mosque and offer ample opportunity to learn about the religion and the world.

It is our duty to attend the Friday congregation. As Surah Al-Jumu'ah reads, "O you who have believed, when (the'adhan') is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu'ah (Friday), then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew. And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed."

Such is the importance the Almighty has placed on the Friday congregation. We ought to make an effort not to miss this special and blessed prayer. And it's not

